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The Church's Need.

Two papers dealing with the above topic were delivered last month in the Central Hall, Belfast, before a large audience. They represented two points-of-view, the one that of a representative layman, Mr. Harold Thomas ; the other that of one of our younger ministers, the Rev. Albert Whitford. Both were thoughtful and pointed in character, and we are glad to have the opportunity of reproducing them for the most part in our columns. This month we are able to give the bulk of Mr. Thomas' suggestive paper, that of Mr. Whitford we hold over for the following issue. We hope that our readers will give to these timely utterances the attention they fully deserve, and may attention blossom into fruitful action !

It was fitting that the laity and the Ministry should alike address us on such a topic. This not only accords with our ecclesiastical theory as to the equality of our elders, lay and clerical, but also emphasises the fact that the church is dependent upon both. If, as Mr. Thomas points out, our ministers need to be more efficient, the attainment of that desirable end would not solve our problem. No ministers, however efficient, could touch and move the hearts of unresponsive or absent members. Just as on a famous occasion Sam Weller lacked the vision to see through a wooden staircase into the privacy of Mr. Pickwick's apartments, so ministerial eloquence is unable to pierce, with any degree of living effect, wooden pews. Ministers need the laity first of all before their chief work, that of preaching the gospel of Christ, can be so much as begun. Nor is it their physical presence alone that is essential. The prepared spirit, the receptive mind, are even more necessary. Merely perfunctory attendance at worship helps no one—it neither blesses him that gives it nor him upon which it is grudgingly bestowed. There can be no true spiritual transmission where utterance and receiver fail to accord. It is possible that the once more prevalent practice of family prayer would have a surprising effect upon public worship and make it more truly spontaneous and spiritual. Worshippers who are not only present in body, but in spirit as well, help a minister tremendously.

Again, never were the younger people more needed by the church than they are to-day. Institutions, like individuals, tend to grow old and to suffer senile decay. But just as among adults the presence of young children delays the coming of age and even affords a measure of new life and outlook, so it is with young persons and the church. Instead of holding aloof when its institutions seem middle-aged or worse, the youths and maidens of our community should make their energy and their freshness of outlook more evident and influential. They must not forget that sometimes the few faithful, who in so many instances have borne the heat and burden of the church's day, find the work of carrying on indefinitely, both wearisome and soul-destroying. Criticism they never lack for long—helpful and enduring co-operation is more of a *rara avis.*

Notes of the Month.

It is a matter of congratulation that thus early in a new year, when the sound of our heartfelt greetings has scarcely died away, there is a general agreement amongst the experts that our commerce and industry are about to revive. Responsible public men, from our Imperial Prime Minister downwards and not overlooking the heads of some of the great banks, clearly envisage the signs of widespread amelioration. The one serious cloud on the industrial horizon is the unsettled state of the coal trade. Yet even here the situation is not without its bright promise of improvement. When men like Lord Londonderry both see and strongly stress the fact that the only way of hope is that of understanding, co-operation and good will, then the day of salvation from the ills of strikes and deadlocks comes appreciably nearer. If long before May, owners and men can come together in such a mood, ready to take cognisance of each other's point of view, and prepared to make concession to the common good, then the way of escape is open. Just when things are on the mend we cannot afford such a setback as a national strike in the mines or on the railways would represent. May the spirit of insight and far-sighted wisdom prevail so that what is now good may soon be even better. Too long has unemployment claimed its many victims. A spell of throbbing industry would make us forget the social ills from which we have so heavily suffered in these recent days.

* *

The meeting of which we spoke in the January number was duly held, and proved a very satisfactory success. Of the papers we have spoken elsewhere and they may be allowed to speak for themselves in this and the March number. But both the speakers must have felt encouraged by the size and character of their audience. The latter was large enough to fill the Central Hall and was made up of persons who are responsible for much of the good work done in the churches of Belfast and district. From further away came other representative members of our community; all these mingled together in a sociable spirit and provided the right atmosphere for the discussion that followed the social interval. Pointed papers prompted a pertinent discussion and the latter was always animated and interesting. The general impression was that the meeting had not only fulfilled its immediate object but had paved the way for later gatherings of a similarly helpful character.

* *

One of our oldest and most admirable institutions is that of the Belfast Domestic Mission. Since 1853, the year of its founding, it has been of immense help to many persons, and still endeavours to maintain its great traditions of practical Christian work. Its great need is an increased list of annual subscribers. Through the death in recent years of many generous supporters, the number of those who directly contribute to its funds is steadily waning. It should not be forgotten that even small annual subscriptions would be gratefully welcomed from friends in city and country. The Hon. Treasurer is Mr. John Mackenzie, the Ulster Bank, Waring Street, Belfast. The Annual Services and Meeting of the Domestic Mission are fixed for March 7th and 8th respectively. It is interesting to note that the special preacher this year is the Rev. G. J. Slipper, of Newry, who formerly did such splendid and much appreciated work in Stanhope Street. May good attendances and a record collection mark the occasion of his visit to speak for the cause he has still so much at heart!

The Business Agent, the Rev. G J. Slipper, earnestly asks for the early payment of all outstanding accounts for the Magazine. Some of these are now considerably over-due, and it would greatly facilitate the balancing of the accounts if prompt payment were the practice.

Some Great Preachers.

I. Phillips Brooks. (1835-1893)

In this issue we give the first of a series of sketches concerning some great preachers of modern times. We hope to make it plain that the men with whom we deal transcend in their importance and appeal the particular churches to which they belonged. They voiced general needs and sought to satisfy such by a message that evoked response from many hearts. It is rarely the strongest and deepest Christian exponents who strike a decisive note or dwell upon denominational differences. The light of divine love and the depth of human anguish come together in their passionate endeavour to satisfy the cravings of the human soul.

The first of our great subjects is the well-known American divine, the Rev. Phillips Brooks, D.D. We give him priority notably because he is admittedly one of the outstanding preachers of recent times, but also for a personal reason. When attending the Centennial gatherings in Boston last May, we were privileged to have as our guide to the chief attractions of the City a well-informed and cultured inhabitant. Among the places visited in our all-too-short survey of Boston was the famous Trinity Church filled for many years by large congregations to hear the message so eloquently and persuasively delivered by Phillips Brooks. Never resorting to sensationalism, but basing his appeal upon a broad and practical interpretation of the Gospel of Christ, he evinced a marvellous power to attract and hold perhaps the largest and most cultured congregation in Boston. Trinity Church is an unusually large building, opened in 1877 to replace a previous Church on the same site which was burned in the Boston fire of 1872. Before it there now stands a fine statue of Phillips Brooks, erected since his death on January 23, 1893. Born in Boston on December 13, 1835, he took his degree at Harvard College and later was trained for the Protestant Episcopalian Church. The first ten years of his ministry were spent in the city of Philadelphia, but in 1869 he left the latter to begin the Ministry which made him famous at Trinity Church, Boston. There he remained with increasing renown and influence till death called him in the year 1893. He several times visited England and his preaching always drew immense congregations to places like Westminster Abbey. One feature of his utterances was its rapidity, there being few professional reporters equal to the taking down verbatim of his sermons, his average speed being over two hundred words a minute. This eloquence was coupled with intense earnestness and sincerity, so that there may be said of him what he affirmed of the ideal preacher in his Yale Lectures on Preaching: "The thought is stronger for us because he has thought it. The feelings is more vivid because he has felt it. And always he leads us to God by a way along which he has gone himself." In printed form, his sermons have been widely read, as also have his series of lectures like the above-mentioned on preaching. It was his passionate sincerity, combined with sanity and common-sense, which enabled him to preach "as one having authority." Numbering among his hearers some of the wealthiest people of Boston he emphasised the responsibility of riches and fearlessly espoused the cause of the poor and oppressed. Amongst his friends he included members of many churches, not the least congenial being men like Dr. Brooke Herford, his contemporary in Boston. Perhaps the fact that Phillips Brooks came of Unitarian stock accounted for the breadth and liberality of his teachings as also for the character of his intimates. His personality made him welcome in

all circles and those who knew him best admired the man and his message most. We propose to give an example of his preaching, taken from the sermon on the "Symmetry of Life." This may be read in its intirety in the volume of sermons usually named from its first and most famous member: "The Candle of the Lord."

THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF LIFE.

"But when a man has length and breadth of life together, we feel at once how the two help each other. Length without breadth is hard and narrow. Breadth without length, —sympathy with others in a man who has no intense and clear direction for himself,—is soft and weak. You see this in the instinctive and strong dislike which all men have for the professional reformer and philanthropist. The world dislikes a man, who, with no definite occupation of his own, not trying to be anything particular himself, devotes himself to telling other people what they ought to be. It may allow his good intentions, but it will not feel his influence. The man whom the world delights to feel is the man who has evidently conceived some strong and distinct purpose for himself, from which he will allow nothing to turn his feet aside, who means to be something with all his soul; and yet who finds, in his own earnest effort to fill out his own career, the interpretation of the careers of other men; and also finds, in sympathy with other men, the transfiguration and sustainment of his own appointed struggle.

"Indeed these are the two ways in which the relation between the length and breadth of a man's life, between his energy in his own career and his sympathy with the careers of other men, comes out and shows itself. First, the man's own career becomes to him the interpretation of the careers of other men; and secondly, by his sympathy with other men, his own life displays to him its best capacity. The first of these is very beautiful to watch. Imagine the reformer, whom I spoke of, suddenly called to forget the work of helping other men, and to plunge into some work of his own. With what surprise at his own increase of wisdom he would come back, by and by, to the help of his brethren! What far wiser and more reverent hands he would lay upon their lives; with what tones of deepened understanding he would speak to their needs and sins and temptations, after he had himself tried to live a true life of his own! This is the reason, I suppose, why, in the Bible, the ministry of angels to mankind, while it is clearly intimated, is made so little of. It is because, however real it is, it could not be brought very close to the intelligence and gratitude of men, so long as the personal lives of the angels are hidden in mystery. Only he who lives a life of his own can help the lives of other men. Surely there is here one of the simplest and strongest views which a man possibly can take of his own life. 'Let me live,' he may say 'as fully as I can, in order that in this life of mine I may learn what life really is, and so be fit to understand and help the lives of men around me. Let me make my own career as vivid and successful as possible, that in it I may get at the secret of life, which, when I have once found it, will surely be the key to other lives besides my own." He who should talk and think so of his own career would evidently have gone far towards solving the problem of the apparent incompatibility between intense devotion to one's own pursuit, and cordial sympathy with other men. He would find, in the very heart of his own work, the clue to the works of other men. He would be no mere specialist, and yet he would toil hardest of all men in the special task in which he was engaged; But his task would be always glorified and kept from narrowness by his perpetual demand upon it, that it

should give him such a broad understanding of human life in general as should make him fit to read and touch and help all other kinds of life.

"And if thus the special life does much to make the sympathy with other lives intelligent and strong, the debt is yet not wholly on one side. There is a wonderful power in sympathy to open and display the hidden richness of a man's own seemingly narrow life. You think that God has been training you in one sort of discipline, but when you let yourself go out of sympathy with other men whose disciplines have been completely different from your own, you find that in your discipline the power of theirs was hidden. This is the power which sympathy has to multiply life and make out of one experience the substance and value of a hundred. The well man sympathizes with the sick man, and thereby exchanges, as it were, some of the superfluous riches of his health into the other coin of sickness, gets something of the culture which would have come to him if he had himself been sick. The sick man, in return, gets something, even in all his pain and weakness, of the discipline of health and strength. The same is true about the sympathy of the rich with the poor, of the believer with the doubter, of the hopeful with the despondent, of the liberal with the bigoted; aye, even of the saint with the sinner. The holiest soul, pitying the brother-soul which has fallen into vilest vice, gains, while it keeps its own purity unsoiled, something of the sight of that other side of God, the side where justice and forgiveness blend in the opal mystery of grace, which it would seem as if only the soul that looked up out of the depths of guilt could see. All this is perfect in the vicariousness of Christ; and what was perfect there, is echoed imperfectly in the way in which every man's special life becomes enlarged and multiplied as he looks abroad from it in sympathy with other men."

The Poetry of Tagore.

Not since Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* won its vogue has any Eastern poetry had such popularity as Tagore's Gitanjali. I had the great pleasure of listening to Mr. W. B. Yeats, many years ago, giving his famous lecture on Tagore, which is now printed as an introduction to the English translation of Gitanjali. There is astonishing variety in the work of Rabindranath Tagore. Drama of every kind—tragic, symbolical, comic, blank verse, rhymed couplet, prose, novels, short stories and poetry, reflective, lyric and religious—not even Victor Hugo had a wider range of form and mood—I leave out of account his countless essays and lectures, sermons, criticisms, writings on politics and education, on economics and psychology. He was born in the Ganges Valley in 1861, a Bengali. His greatness begins to appear, when we remember his immense influence for the last 40 years in the East. No other is remotely like him. *His* epoch, as emphatically as that of Dante was his, and more decidedly than Shakespere's was his.

Tagore is a fine Bengali scholar, and there seems little in his native literature which has any great value, which has not been taken into his genius. But I think we are justified in placing Western, which means mainly English, literature among his formative influences. He was called, while in his teens, the Bengali Shelley, and he has translated Shelley and acknowledged him as an influence. The "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," he says was like a transcript of his mind in his youth. "I felt as if I could have written it." Keats and Browning colour deeply much of his thought. "The Ode on a Grecian Urn," is a favourite poem with him, and in his novel, "The Home and the World," he has made a striking adaptation of the scheme of "The Ring and the Book," telling the one story through different minds.

It must, I think, be admitted that he has written a great deal too much and that the chief stumbling block to his immortality is the inequality of his work. There is a recurrence of a certain vocabulary of flowers, south wind, spring, autumn tears, laughter, separation, etc., etc., in everything he has written, but never has he expressed more perfectly his wistful sense of loss in the visible world, than in that lovely finish of *Urbas* :—

!

" She will not return, she will not return
That moon of glory has set,
She has made her home on the Mount of Setting, has Urbasi !
Therefore to-day, on earth, with the joyous breath of Spring
Mingles the long drawn sigh of some eternal separation !
On the night of full moon, when the world brims with laughter,
Memory, from somewhere far away, pipes a flute that brings unrest,
The tears gush out !
Yet in that weeping of the spirit Hope wakes and lives,
Ah, Unfettered One ! "

His poem *Sea-Waves* is the grandest and most terrible of sea-storms in the world's literature. Here is the opening stanza—

" Destruction swings and rocks on the lap of the shoreless sea,
In dreadful festival
Clanging its hundred wings, the indomitable wind rages and runs !
Sky and sea revel in mighty union, veiling the world's eyelash in blackness,
The lightning starts and trembles, the waves foam in laughter,—
The sharp, white, dreadful mirth of brute Nature !
Eyeless, earless, homeless, loveless, the drunken forces of evil
Have shattered all bonds and are rushing wildly to ruin."

But it is as a mystic and authentic voice of the spiritual mind—a lyric expression which has no living equal outside of Christendom—that reveals Tagore's " Song Offerings " and " Fruit-Gathering " immortal. Illumination came to him in the mid-years of life. " One morning," he says, " in Calcutta, when looking out from my veranda upon the tree tops and gazing at the sunrise, suddenly a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side. This radiance pierced in a moment through the folds of sadness and despondency which had accumulated over my heart, and flooded it with this universal light. I was full of gladness, full of love for every person and every tiniest thing, and I have tried to explain it in my poems. I have felt ever since that this is my goal in life : to explain this fulness of life in its beauty. Something inexplicable has happened, my whole being is aching with an awakening, and I hear at a distance the call of the great Ocean." His spirit is emancipated when he discovers that the Beyond and the Within are the same ; that One Soul animates all. Tagore leans far towards a naturalistic mysticism, but deeply spiritual. Everything in the universe is enveloped in God. " He it is, the innermost One, who awakens my being with His deep hidden touches." " At the immortal touch of Thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy, and gives birth to utterance ineffable." Tagore did not turn to an ascetic life, but continued to find pure delight in the wonderful world of Nature as ever new to him, and in the love of humnan mind. " Deliverance is not in renunciation. I will never shut the door of my senses to the delights of sight and hearing in the beauty and music of the world. Accept what is offered by a sacred love." Then Tagore utters this beautiful prayer—

" Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that Thy living touch is upon all my limbs. I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that Thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind, I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart, and keep my love in flower knowing that Thou hast Thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart. And it shall be my endeavour to reveal Thee in my actions, knowing it is Thy strength gives me strength to act."

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There is much here in these Indian lyrics to remind us of the "Imitatio Christi" with this great difference. In Thomas a Kempis sanctity is set in the closed cell, while in Tagore the scene is the open temple under encompassing skies. Both are like the Psalms of David and are meant to be chanted, but Tagore's Vision is the attainment of the soul's unity with the whole of life in the universe, in harmony with universal nature; that being man's fundamental need.

His religion is a personal experience, not a theology. Of the depth and sincerity of his personal experience of God no one who has read his Gitanjali can doubt. God is strangely close to his thought. He is often more theistic than any Western theist. God seems to become more personalised for him, the Indian, in a more intimate, individual fashion, than He does for the ordinary Christian, as the following beautifully reveals—

"Day after day, O Lord of my life, shall I stand before Thee face to face? With folded hands, O Lord of all the worlds, shall I stand before Thee face to face?
Under Thy great sky in solitude and silence, with humble heart shall I stand before Thee face to face?
In this laborious world of Thine, tumultuous with toil and with struggle, among hurrying crowds shall I stand before Thee face to face?
And when my work shall be done in this world, O Kings of King, alone and speechless shall I stand before Thee face to face?"

How exquisitely tender this song of separation by death—

"Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.
Let it not be a death but completeness.
Let love melt into memory and pain into songs.
Let the flight through the sky end in the folding of the wings over the nest.
Let the last touch of your hands be gentle like the flower of the night.
Stand still, O Beautiful End, for a moment, and say your last words in silence.
I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way."

Tagore's translation of a Hindu song shows us his own spirit of exquisite and pensive religious musing—

> "I had travelled all day and was tired, then I bowed my head towards Thy Kingly Court still far away. The night deepened, a longing burnt in my heart. O my lover, my beloved, my Best in all the world! Ah, who is this whose arms enfold me? Whatever I have to leave let me leave, and whatever I have to bear let me bear. Only let me walk with Thee, my Lover, My Beloved, my Best in all the world."

For the deepening of our spiritual life which is so urgently and unitedly our need at present I know of no modern book to compare with "Song Offerings and Fruit Gathering." It is a book to possess. The beauty it contains is that of the Spirit undying and fragrant as the mystic scent of some rare incense. Tagore is wistful, tender and devotional, and has wreathed together in poetic beauty a nosegay of scented blossoms from that Indian garden of enchantment from which every religious soul will find inspiration. A book that will move men as long as the English language is read. We pray with him "Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain but for the heart to conquer it," for "when man bursts his mortal bounds, is not the Boundless revealed that moment?"—

> "The world is Thine, from Thee it rose
> By Thee it ebbs, by Thee it flows."

G.V.C.

N.B.—All Communications should reach the Editor, Ardeevin, Cadogan Park, Belfast, not later than the 16th of the month preceding publication.

St. Valentine.

The middle of February, at one period, was for those who would now be called "flappers," a period of great expectancy and interest, when the postman's knock was eagerly listened for. Stationers' shop-windows were full of neat little cardboard boxes containing white satin-cases artistically decorated, delicately perfumed and conveying tender sentiments in poetic form.

Occasionally an old valentine of a century ago, preserved under glass and frame, may still be found. When Sam Weller's father found him sitting at a table, with his head on his left arm, and his tongue in his cheek, laboriously composing a valentine, he received a rebuke, "O Samivel, Samivel, I wouldn't have thought it of you!"

The picture post-card seems to have put the valentine off the field, or else this is too busy an age for such frivolities. However, St. Valentine is not forgotten, and if he wasn't a Presbyterian, at least he was a martyr, of whom there is no evidence that he personally had anything to do with the custom associated with his name. "He assisted the Christians during the persecution under Claudius II., for which in the year 270 A.D., he was put to death, being first beaten with clubs and afterwards beheaded. Pope Julian erected a church to his honour at Rome. His day falls upon the 14th of February." That date seems to have been that of a pagan festival, when names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by young men as chance directed, and the pastors of the early church made use of this Saint's Day, to turn it to better purpose.

Such a change having been made, having no particular interest in St. Valentine personally, good man though he was, we might justly use the occasion to commemorate one, who was one of the greatest thinkers of the early church, who was not made a

saint, but beheaded in another generation by the Popes as a dangerous heretic—Valentinus. He did not found a separate denomination, but, he started a movement which Church writers associate with his name—Valentinianism, and though in course of time he came to have many bitter opponents, yet all agree on his extraordinary learning and eloquence and the intense purity of his life. It is conjectured that he lived about A.D. 100 to A.D. 180. He seems to have passed the greater part of his life in Egypt, and was for some considerable time at Rome. At his death he was still an orthodox member of the church, though orthodoxy at that time was not the narrow thing of later times.

There was a tremendous ferment of new thought at that period. We greatly err if we consider all was simple and clear, for though we might say the Christian religion took its rise at Jerusalem, yet it was only like the source of a river, where a stream springs forth and flows down the mountain-side until it comes into a sort of basin, and then from round about other streams flow into the basin, and the river rushes forward out of it with tremendous force. Such was the case with Christianity and the basin was Alexandria in Northern Egypt, which was practically to the world what London is to-day. All religions were represented there, all were in touch with each other, and naturally they compared notes and found what they had in common. It was there that Gnosticism had its chief centre, and though at one time the mention of this was received with a shrug of the shoulders, yet because of the immense amount of material which has come to light from all over the world, during the last fifty years, contributing to the Science of Religion, the value of that aspect of Christian teaching, stamped out and maligned by a later orthodoxy, is now being appreciated and large numbers of people at the present day are turning to it with renewed interest. There are three manuscripts called the Bruce and Askew Codices and the Akhnim Codices, the first two of which have been known for a very long time ; the latter discovered in 1896, having been purchased from a dealer in antiquities at Cairo, who said that it had been found in a niche in a wall. The latter is divided into three sections ; the Apocryphon of John, the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, the Acts of Peter, and in the commencement of the first part are the words, " How now was the Saviour chosen ; and wherefore was He sent to the world by His Father who sent Him ; and who is His Father ; and what is the formation of the æon to which we shall go ? " Well, that is an interesting question, and may be taken to be the theme of that section. The Askew Codex contains the Pistis Sophia (a Gnostic Gospel) and extracts from The Books of the Saviour. The Bruce Codex contains " The Book of the Great Logos according to the Mystery." Prior to 1851, the Askew Codex was translated into Latin, the Bruce was not known until 1891-1892.

Now these are a rich store, and Valentinus is considered to have had a great deal to do with the teaching they contain, so in the Pistis Sophia which implies that Christ after His death, appeared to His disciples and followers in an inner circle,—to use a modern term " materialized "—for a great number of years perhaps 40 or 50, and the instruction in the Pistis Sophia was given in the thirteenth year, when he was taking them from grade to grade in the Mysteries, the key-truths of which were never committed to writing, but only imparted from mouth to ear. The scheme is indicated in these words which occur almost at the beginning of the Pistis Sophia—" The Mystery which is beyond the world, that by which all things exist. It is all evolution and all involution. Because of it all mysteries exist and all their regions.', These were the big ideas that Valentinus and those of his following tried to deal with, and for that we honour Valentinus.

ULLIN.

"Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland."

By Dr. Henry Montgomery.

The Struggle at Strabane.

The debate respecting Mr. Porter prepared the way for that memorable contest on the subject of *Christian Liberty*, which commenced upon the 28th June, 1827, and continued without interruption, during three entire days. In consequence of Mr. Porter's statements, as already quoted, Dr. Cooke proposed, that every Minister and Elder should be required to declare his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, or, on the other hand, to avow openly, that he did not believe the doctrine. This proposition, seemingly so fair, was supported by a speech of great tact, much popular eloquence, and many ingenious sophisms—interlarded with eulogies of the Established Church, and certain expressions which left no doubt as to his political predilections. He dwelt especially upon his regard for his Arian brethren, his disinclination to injure them, and his wish that the two parties might separate like Abraham and Lot. He then urged that it was only honest for every Minister to avow his real opinions, as *he* had always done ; and closed with a glowing peroration about " not snatching the crown of glory from the head of the Redeemer, and dooming souls to everlasting destruction." In fact, nothing could have been better suited to the purpose which it was designed to serve ; and the applause was consequently ardent and prolonged. The unfortunate Arians were looked upon with pity, as a party entirely demolished, when Mr. Porter rose very quickly, and took Dr. Cooke's speech to pieces with a master hand ; stripping off all the tinsel of rhetoric and exposing its manifold sophisms. He dwelt especially upon the only thing which it contained, resembling a solid argument—the propriety of Ministers of the gospel avowing, openly, their real sentiments on religious subjects. In this principle he heartily concurred, provided the avowal was required by the parties who had a right to demand it—and such parties, he irresistibly contended, were the *Congregations* of Ministers *alone*, and not Presbyteries or Synods, to whom they owed no allegiance. He then showed that submission to such unauthorised claims upon the part of Churches, had produced all the corruptions that have defaced the beauty of the Gospel, all the tyrannies and persecutions that have dishonoured the Christian name, and all the havock of conscience which is still going on in creed-bound churches. The declaration which Dr. Cooke proposed, he clearly proved to be only the point of the wedge, which, if once introduced, would rend asunder our Christian liberties, and re-impose the yoke of human bondage which our church had so happily cast off. He then called upon any man, to bring forward a single verse of the New Testament which conferred upon any church the authority proposed to be exercised over its members by the General Synod of Ulster. On the contrary, he cited many portions, distinctly establishing the liberty of individual conscience, in opposition to all claims of external power.

Dr. Stewart came to the rescue, and endeavoured to re-construct what Mr. Porter had so completely demolished ; but, notwithstanding all his fluency and ingenuity, the scattered materials would not firmly co-alesce, and Mr. Fletcher Blakely very pleasantly performed the easy duty of again strewing them on the ground.

After these displays, the battle became general ; and our opponents finding that they could not reconcile the claim of Church Authority with the free exercise of Christian Liberty shifted their ground and drew out the long array of their forces upon the field of controversial theology. This change of tactics was certainly very annoying ; for it was hard to be assailed by the hour with the recital

of old and dull sermons, which had not even the slighest bearing upon the question at issue. I must admit, however, that it possessed come counterbalancing advantage ; for the dulness of the oratory prevented the overcrowding of the house ; and two gentlemen in particular, vied with each other in this salutary labour. In vain, we reminded them of the real subject of debate, and showed them that it was not the truth of Trinitarianism or Unitarianism, of Calvinism or Arminianism—but simply and solely whether the one party had a right to force their opinions upon the other party. We admitted, that if they could prove themselves to be *infallible*, we should cheerfully yield to their authority ; but failing to do this, we submitted the possibility that they might, themselves, be in error, and consequently, if we took them for our guides, it would be nothing more than "the blind leading the blind"—a charge which they often preferred against their Roman Catholic brethren. In these attempts to bring them to reason and to order, I had my share ; and I must not, in the affectation of personal humility, be guilty of violating historical truth. On the evening of the second day's debate, I enjoyed the privilege of delivering my sentiments upon the whole question, at considerable length ; and my speech, which produced some sensation at the time, was afterwards communicated to the world through the impartial agency of the Belfast *Northern Whig*—a paper which has been ever ready to befriend the injured, and to do justice to all—a paper, to whose great ability and unswerving independence, all liberal views, commercial, political, and religious, owe very much of their extension and stability, in the province of Ulster. Through that liberal journal, which was the first, I believe, in Ireland, to report the proceedings of religious assemblies, all our proceedings at Strabane obtained a wide and valuable circulation : and my own speech in particular, was published in various forms in England, Scotland and Ireland, to the extent, it has been calculated of 30,000 copies. Nor was this my only reward. Some months afterwards, the Unitarians in Ireland, aided, I rejoice to say, by liberal Episcopalians, Catholics, and Calvinists, presented me with a Service of Plate which cost £600—and an Address, from the sentiments of approbation and religious liberty which it breathed, even more valuable than their munificent gift. These details, I am quite aware, will subject me to many sneers, as to my vanity and self-laudation ; but I feel no uneasiness on that account. Had any other person written these "Outlines," he would unquestionably have mentioned circumstances so encouraging to those who may have to contend with difficulties in the maintenance of conscience, and so honourable to enlightened Christians of every church : and I do not think that I am bound to do injustice to the high principles and generous conduct of others, merely because I had the good fortune to be, myself, the object of their approbation. At the same time, I candidly admit, that the intolerant spirit and proceedings of our opponents, and the entire novelty of the contest in which we were so unexpectedly engaged, caused my humble exertions to be appreciated far beyond their intrinsic value.

(To be Continued)

A Query.

Can any of our readers give any information as to the length of time the Unitarian Young Men's Christian Association, Belfast, was in existence. Formed in March, 1858, it had an apparently strong Committee on which were Herbert Darbishire, F. D. Finlay. W. H. Patterson, Henry Bruce, John Ritchie, jun., with others. One of its objects was "The Manifestation of Christian Sympathy, towards strangers of our denomination coming to reside in Belfast." In October of same year, a well attended service was held in the Corn Exchange, about 500 being present according to the *Northern Whig*.

The Need of the Church.

From a Layman's Point of View.

BY MR. HAROLD THOMAS.
(Vice-President of the Belfast Chapter)

We are faced with the necessity of organising a Forward Movement for deepening our devotional life. That such a movement should be needed points not only to lack of sufficient devotion in the pews but to lack of sufficient effectiveness in the pulpit.

This is evident when you reflect that if all our ministers had the preaching force of a St. Paul bestowed upon them there would be no occasion for organising a forward movement at all. Of course not one in a thousand millions can be a St. Paul, and we must not ask anything unreasonable from our ministers. Still if the Movement is to fulfil all our hopes it does seem to me that we do need some increase of gripping power in the pulpit. I have heard all our ministers but five, and I believe that every one of them has it *in* him to heighten his standard by another 10 per cent., and in most cases by 20 per cent. or even more. 25 per cent. would not be too much seeing that a Forward Movement is in progress.

Now I must not be understood as suggesting resort to artificial devices for provoking attention, for they are no use in the long run. Unless there is a living message of highest things behind they will only let the preacher down in the end.

The minister of every church we have should ask himself the question, What is the note that I sound, and do I sound it clearly and strongly? Notes of course differ. In one of our churches the cultivation of simple earnest personal devotion may be the first object. In another it may be necessary to give a good deal of attention to the questionings of the inquiring modern mind and to proving that the simple principles of the Gospels are on the one hand sufficient, and on the other indispensable, for the rescue both of the individual and of society. In some churches more notes than one need to be sounded. The point is that each church should have its own note, or harmonious chord blended of different notes, sounded so certainly and clearly from the pulpit that it rings in the ears of the church's own people, and that outsiders will recognise it and be impressed.

In these strenuous modern times the light in the pulpit must be powerful enough to attract. What is wanted is an incandescent light, if not electric then gas will do, a bright flame radiating warmth, which will send the congregation home glowing and illuminated and anxious to come back for their own sakes.

I know very well that asking for 20 per cent. is asking a great deal. But I would diffidently hint that some of our ministers, if they would review their methods on the lines of Industrial Efficiency Research might vastly improve their effectiveness by a slight revision of their styles of language or utterance—intonation, compactness, etc. Beyond that, 20 per cent. means much more time on preparation and I know, that after carrying out his other duties, the minister hasn't the time he would like. I know too that several of our ministers have been given such an accumulation of duties outside their own special work, that it is a wonder they maintain the standard of pulpit effectiveness they at present do.

There are ways of helping them which I am going to turn to now, but before proceeding I repeat that in my judgment increased effectiveness of our services is essential if the life and spirit of our churches is to be strengthened to the extent hoped.

I said a minute ago that every minister has at least 10 per cent more effectiveness *in* him. The question is, how are we to get it *out* of him? The answer is, by all of us, those who are absent as well as those who are here,

doing our own part as it ought to be done. In every group of people, as in a congregation, there are always to be found two or three who are touchy and unreasonable and a greater number who are wanting in imagination. These people often don't realise what a discouraging effect they have, how much harder they make the minister's work. If you want to get the best out of your minister you must surround him with an atmosphere of sympathy. If this is done, a sensitive one who has been chilled or half paralysed will find himself, and the sturdy ones who have been giving their best in spite of all discouragements will do a better best under the favouring circumstances.

To anybody deficient in imagination I would say, whenever inclined to disapprove of something your minister does or does not do, first imagine yourself in his place. A minister's position after all is not an easy one. Most of us would shirk the idea of having to fill it. We know that to satisfy everybody is a difficult task, and the plain truth is, we would not like to face the duty of living up to the standard of cheerful courage in all circumstances, the superiority to ordinary infirmities, which we expect from our minister.

He is entitled to require us to facilitate his work for him by every means in our power. The first thing to remember is that his ministrations are for us as well as for others ; and then to come to the services with a receptive mind, tuned in to responsiveness. Don't sit in the pews like icebergs. If it should turn out that what he has to say is not what you are most anxious to hear, remember that it was prepared for you, and that very probably it is something good for you to know, whether you just want to know it or not. And if you desire some light on your present perplexities, if maybe you have a tired soul or a sick mind and look to be cheered, and you get a discourse which seems remote from the level of your daily life—well, it is open to you to *ask* him to deal next time with the reasons for the evils and miseries of life, or whatever is troubling you. Nearly all ministers are only too glad to be taken into the confidence of their people, and will give them what they need if they are only told.

I have seen something of the work in a minister's study. Even though a discourse may only last 20 minutes, a minister who has two services has to find fresh things to say, or fresh ways of saying the same thing, 100 times in the year, and unlike St. Paul he has to keep the same people inspired month after month and year after year. He has his share of personal troubles like other people. Sometimes he may be run down. So it is too much for us to expect that he shall always be at his best. If some Sunday and the next again you feel him not very inspiriting—or, to make no bones about it, dull—it is bad policy to commence to stay away, for that is the worst possible method of helping him to recover himself. If you continue faithful you will at any rate encourage him and help to prevent him falling into a depressed state which dries up his freshness at the source. If in spite of your encouragement he still fails to exert the gripping power you look for, there is a further remedy of which I will say a word in a moment.

With regard to visiting, that frequent subject of grievance, I once knew of a minister who was expected to entertain an old lady by playing cards with her every week. Her people thought it a job for the minister. It was not so enjoyable that they wanted to do it themselves. Leaving out such a case and considering only the visiting that can reasonably be looked for, it may possibly be that your minister's last visit to you was not quite opportune. Perhaps you were just going out, perhaps you were not dressed up for company, possibly even, for once—you were paring potatoes by the drawing room fire, and you hurriedly slipped the dish and basket behind a couch. In spite of your cordiality the minister, sensitive man,

felt in some uncanny way that you were relieved when he went, and failed to realise that you would be extra glad to see him the very next week. This is an example of how misunderstandings can arise, and it shows that the minister is not *always* to blame. On the other hand I cannot go so far as to say that he is *never* at fault. But if he does not come for some time, either from pressure of other duties, or from having been unwittingly frightened away, or even from neglect, don't wait in injured silence, but *tell him* that you are looking forward with pleasure or desire to his coming.

I think I have said enough to indicate my solution of the problem how to get a forward move on in our churches. The Roman Catholic Church is a corporation of priests which claims divine commission ; its people are the children of the Church received on the priest's terms and without responsibility for it. With us it is different. *We* are the Church, and the ministers are set up by ourselves on our terms, with the promise of our support. If it fails them they are disconcerted.

In this world each can only realise his full possibilities by the assistance of others. *We* need our church, but our minister needs *us*. My solution of our problem at this juncture consists in completer recognition that church efficiency is a joint product of minister and people ; in a more intimate relationship between people and minister, in which there must be all respect but at the same time no shyness to impede effective co-operation, and no reluctance or failure *in either party* to fulfil the duty it owes to the other.

Now I will take it without examination that the initiative to this more intimate partnership lies mainly on the side of the people ; for even if it were not so I would still say, "This is no time for stiffness, let *us* take the first step. If we ask that the pulpit shall be more compelling, let us first make sure that no reproach lies against us."

It may be that you are prepared with your responsiveness and support your minister faithfully, waiting for him to get over that tired feeling that has come upon him, and yet he doesn't seem to be able to regain his spirit. Here it is time to consider that further remedy I spoke of.

The American Laymen's League has lately published a cartoon showing a minister with a number of sacks on his back, labelled "Wiping off Church Deficit," "Entertainments for Members," "Forming of Boy Scout Unit" and so forth. Underneath is written : "How can he interest his people on Sundays when he is carrying such a load ?" In some cases there is no doubt that the minister is overburdened in this way. He has not only to guide or direct, but to do most of the work himself. This would not be necessary if *every* member of a church did *some* little bit for it.

Only when a minister is sufficiently free to devote himself to the Forward Movement and in the requisite atmosphere of sympathy, can the Forward Movement be expected to prosper.

If we will but *really* take this to heart, if we will but *really* give our minister the practical encouragement he needs, we can at the same time tell him of our expectations, and I believe that he will rise to the occasion, that the increased gripping power in the services will come. In the genial air he will open out like a flower. As likely as not he will put forth blossoms never hoped for—from so gnarled a tree.

I sum up in a series of propositions :

1. That a Forward Movement is needed.

2. That it will be best promoted by striving to increase the power of our regular church services.

3. That while the effectiveness of these depends in the first place on the minister, ultimately it depends also on the spirit and co-operation of the laity.

4. That every member of the church has a personal duty in the Forward Movement.

Let us all, people and ministers alike, consider these vital matters, not in a spirit of self-justification but in a spirit of contrition, contrition for our past lethargy or whatever else we can find ourselves guilty of by searching; and with high resolve for the future.

This is my contribution to our conference. I have purposely omitted reference to questions of the relative emphasis to be laid on different elements in our religious ideas, which is also an important matter but distinct from my propositions. It too may profitably be examined in conferences, but I would not myself attempt to lay down fixed rules about it. I like the idea of each church developing its own vigorous individuality, which will be promoted in each case by the more intimate understanding between people and minister for which I plead.

My propositions are of a general character and apply, whatever the particular emphasis. I trust that they are suitable as a basis for discussion, and that after they have been overhauled a good measure of agreement will be reached. To-night we want to make a definite advance, so that we can go away feeling that the Forward Movement is effectually in motion. The purpose of this meeting is not merely to discuss, but to *stir our wills*, to make each of us go back to his own church with the *will aroused* to do all he can and ought to do there. Make your decision and this meeting will be the spark to kindle a general movement.

But—

"Lose this day loitering, twill be the same story
To-morrow, and the next more dilatory.
The indecision brings its own delays,
And days are lost discussing over days.
Are you in earnest, seize this very minute,
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
Only *engage*, and then the mind grows heated,
Begin, and then the work will be completed."

The Ulster Unitarian Christian Associatio n.

In view of the forthcoming Jubilee Meetings of this Association the following notes may interest many of our readers and we trust enlist the support of all towards the Association. The first annual meeting was held on 26th January, 1877, the Association having been formed on 31st December, 1875, Rev. J. Scott Porter in the chair.

At the first meeting W. J. C. Allen was Chairman. The first list of subscriptions showed a total of £93 2s. 0d., a contrast to this year's £54; there were also Donations of £300 5s. 0d. towards Stocking Depository and fitting up shop, which was opened on 1st May, 1876.

Two original subscribers continue to support the Association, Messrs. W. T. Hamilton and James M'Kisack. The first year's Sales at the Depository amounted to over £90. Great interest was taken in Sunday Schools, and papers read dealing with teaching and work in Schools. It would be interesting to have a new paper on the first subject. "The Duties and Qualifications of a Sunday School Teacher."

The first Agent of the Association was Mrs. M'Ninch, who lived over the shop, 29 Rosemary Street. A Committee Room was in rear.

The first list of subscribers contained names of many notable Belfast citizens: Andrews, Benn, Carr, Davidson, Drennan, Hume, L'Estrange, Musgrave, M'Tear, Neill, Oakman, Riddel, Rogers, Ritchie, Smyth and Ward.

From Stopford Brooke.

The two following definitions are from "Die to Live."—selections from Stopford Brooke, arranged by his daughter Olive Jacks.

(1) "The Love of One's Country." To love one's country is to love its ancient virtues, and hate its ancient wrongs; to mark them out clearly, one from another, and live the one and slay the other.

(2) "The Love of Mankind." To love mankind is to love all the ideas on which the progress of the race depends, and to live one's life in their behalf; to devote one's being to them, and to offer on their altar all we are . . . To love man is to love freedom; freedom for the body, conscience, reason and soul of man, but freedom always self-limited by the law of love; to prophesy freedom, the sister of obedience, over the world; to stand on its side against oppression; to support its causes, whether civil or religious, in all nations; and to allow no national interests, jealousies, no political expediences, no personal desires, to prevent our allegiance to its flag. To love man is to love the idea of justice, equal-handed, for all men, and to live in behalf of it. It is to love truth, the ground of all interchange of thought, and to live for it. It is to love self-surrender, the ground of all action between men, and live for it . . . To love these ideas is to do them; and the doings of these performs all the duties of Love to Mankind.

Reports.

Ballee.—During the recent Christmas recess the Sunday School Scholars numbering about fifty, were hospitably entertained by Rev. J. H. Bibby in the local schoolroom. From first to last the proceedings were of a most enjoyable nature and the entertainment may be said to have, if possible, sur-

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passed the high standard of previous annual functions of a similar nature. In the initial stages each of the young guests received oranges and sweets, after which outdoor amusements were indulged in until tea time, when a welcome meal was dispensed by the Misses L. Balmer, M. Napier, E. Hughes, and K. Stitt and Mrs. R. M'Cullen. Indoor games were subsequently entered into with zest, and during an interval gift stockings, lucky bags, and handsome boxes of toffee were distributed. Lengthening shaddows came all too soon and footsteps had reluctantly to be turned towards home, all having "come to the end of a perfect day." Previous to their departure hearty cheers were given by the young folk for their host and the several ladies of the congregation who so willingly contributed towards the success of the function. At the New Year the minister kindly presented to each Sunday scholar valuable books and seasonable magazines to all members of the congregation, a kindness much appreciated by the recipients.

* *

Ballyhemlin. — In memory of Douglas Barron, a Tree and a Tea were given to the Sunday school children, and other children in the neighbourhood, at the Manse, on New Year's Day. Mrs. Hoy, Miss Fulton and Miss K. Anderson assisted in entertaining and distributing the gifts. The children evidently enjoyed the occasion. The distribution of school prizes, by J. R. Rankin, Esq., J.P., took place at the Meeting House on Sunday, December 27th.

* *

Banbridge.—A large gathering of children and their parents in the Dunbar Memorial Public Elementary School, on the night of the 8th of January, all most evidently enjoying themselves, was our annual scholars' Social and Prize Distribution. After the preliminary half-an-hour romping about, during which the hadies and some of the young people were busy "behind the scenes," very enjoyable tea and cakes were provided and made to disappear rapidly. A few organisde games and then the prizes were presented. The prizes were more numerous than usual this year, and it was suggested, especially as the average attendance at the Sunday School had been higher than usual, that probably it would be made more difficult to earn a prize the next year. Mrs. Bell, one of our most indefatigable of church workers, very kindly made the presentations. Six beautiful Bibles were also presented to the best attenders at Church Worship under the League of Loyalty schemes. Master Robert Lyons won first prize here, having attended the service every morning throughout the year. Special prizes from friends, were also earned for highest attendances at the Sunday School to Thomas Taylor and Gordon Martin. Father Christmas did not forget his annual visit and brought a hundred wonderful things, and distributed them in a fresh and lively manner as though it were his first round on Christmas Eve. Recitations from the Misses Dorothy Godding and Greta Stevenson, another game and then the National Anthem, closed one of the jolliest gatherings we have had.

* *

Downpatrick.—His earlier surviving contemporaries will be especially sorry to say goodbye to Mr. S. C. N. Lowry, who, after long occupying a foremost place in the life of the Downpatrick district, is about to make his home in Belfast. A man of attractive personality and distinguished intelligence, Mr. Lowry for many years, until he retired on pension, was manager of the local branch of the Ulster Bank, nor could any responsible member of their staff have been more deservedly trusted by the directorate owing to his character and ability, or more highly esteemed by the bank clientele. By the community in general, with their experience of his courtesy and good humour, no less than his kindness of heart, he is held in affectionate regard.

He has been in everything so to speak. Church, Farming Societies, the old Musical Society, the Technical Education Committee, of which he is chairman, the Cricket Club, the Harriers, and much else, are indebted to his practical help, given often at the cost of no little time and labour. The treasurerships and other useful offices he has filled are numberless, and it can be truly said that Mr. Lowry has never served any but a good cause, and never served it otherwise than well, Left to cherish the memory of his good fellowship, his friends wish him "the best," trusting that his health, which has been a source of anxiety of late, may be in some measure restored by the change of air and scene.

* *

Greyabbey.—For the purpose of providing funds for the exterior renovation of the church a successful sale of work and cake fair was held on 23rd December. There was an encouraging attendance and the opening ceremony was performed by Mrs. Robert Campbell, of Belfast, under the chairmanship of Rev. S. E. Bowen, of Crumlin, and at the close of the proceedings a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mrs. Campbell and the chairman, on the motion of Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A. (minister of the church), seconded by Mr. James Barnes.

* *

Holywood.—As a contribution to the "Forward Movement," the Committee of our Holywood Congregation have adopted a very practical plan to improve the attendance at Sunday worship. At a meeting held recently the twelve members of the Committee present unanimously resolved to pledge themselves to attend, as far as possible, both morning and evening services on Sundays for at least three months, and at the end of that period to take steps for the visitation of those in the Congregation who fail to realise their duty and privilege in regard to the worship of their Church. This challenge on the part of the Committee to their fellow members promises well. The annual Sunday school party, prize distribution, and Christmas tree, postponed from the beginning of the month owing to the prevalence of measles in the town, took place on Friday evening, 27th January, and proved to be one of the happiest and most successful of these popular gatherings. The children met for tea at seven o'clock, and at eight, when the schoolroom was filled with parents and friends, the programme began with an amusing sketch, of which the principals were three very quaint marionettes or dwarfs, personated by James Meneely, Kenneth Robinson and James Shannon. These lads had been trained by Mr. W. J. Harvey, and with him as a sort of Massa Johnson, provided much fun for the audience. Next came the distribution of the Sunday School prizes. These were graciously presented to the successful scholars by Mrs. Omar Nelson, who generously offered a special prize to be competed for this year. The Minister, who presided, gave a brief account, with statistics, of the School's work during the year, and appealed for the co-operation of the parents in regard to the regular and punctual attendance of the children. Three of the scholars had attended every time the school was opened, namely, Sadie Patty, Sadie Lennox and John Lennox. After Mrs. Nelson had been heartily thanked for her presence and help, Miss Eileen Millar gave a recitation, which was cordially encored, and Miss Liggett sang a song, which was succeeded by a charming fairy sketch given by the girls and a number of the infants, under the direction of Mrs. A. F. Robinson. After a dance by Miss Millar, the Christmas Tree, with its bright and attractive fruit was carried on to the platform, and, to the joy of young and old alike, its gifts were distributed by Santa Claus (Mr. Ewart Lockett). A very enjoyable

and successful evening was brought to a close by the singing of "God save the King."

* *

Mountpottinger.—On the Sunday evening preceding Christmas a Special Musical Service was held when the Choir rendered Carols, and Solos were contributed by Mrs. Smith, Miss Nancy Kane and Mr. Wellwood. For what is believed to be the first time in connection with the Church, Instrumental Trios were embodied in the Musical Service; these being performed by the Celeste Trio whose members were Aeolo, Mr. J. Porter; 'Cello, Mr. S. Trevisani; Organ, Mr. H. Shepherd. Mr. Watkins gave his Address on Charles Dickens's story' "A Christmas Carol." On Wednesday, January 13th, a Congregational Social was held under the auspices of the Women's League Branch, when a moderate company was present. Songs were given by Mrs. J. Allen, and Rev. M. Watkins, and Mrs. E. R. Jackson recited. Dancing and games helped to fill in a pleasant evening. A much needed improvement in the lighting of the Church has been effected by the erection of two gas standards on either side of the choir seats. During January the Minister has delivered a series of special Addresses on Sunday evenings, of which the titles were as follows:—January 10th —"Actions and their Results." January 17—"Self-control and Moral Freedom." January 24—"Patriotism and Public Work." January 31—"Loyalty."

* *

Killinchy.—The young people of this congregation gave a most successful rendering of the delightful comedy entitled, "The Pope in Killybuck," on two successive evenings, namely, Friday and Saturday, January 22 and 23. Crowded houses witnessed the rendering of this play on both nights. It is no exaggeration to say that it could be given on more nights as far as the general public were concerned. Enthusiastic appreciation of the acting was heard on all hands. In fact, nothing like it has been seen here for many a long day. The popularity of Louis I. Walsh's Comedy may have had something to do with the enthusiasm roused throughout the country side; but no one could gainsay the fact that the quality of the acting raised the enthusiasm to the highest pitch. The leading actors were Mr. Jim Osborne as Robert John Sloss, Mr. James Stewart as Sam Wisner; Miss Orr as Aunt Rebecca. These three admirably sustained their difficult parts, entered into the spirit of the play, and looked their part with that veri-similitude which ensured the success of the venture. These characters were ably seconded by Miss Osborne, as Margaret Jane, the servant girl; Mr. Frank Bishop as Alex. M'Cracken, Auctioneer and Valuator; Mr. J. H. Fitchie as Joe Paul, Farmer and Executor of Joshua Noone's will; Mr. Willie Banks as Wm. John Anderson, Farmer; Mr. Gerwyn Williams as Dominick Convery, Member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians; Mr. Wm. Stewart as Job Wilson, Farmer and Presbyterian Elder; and Mr. Frank Osborne as attending the Auction. The Hall was filled to its utmost capacity on both nights. Mrs. Elison and the Misses Elison largely contributed to the success of the evening by supplying appropriate music. We are much indebted to these ladies for their generous aid freely given. The scenery was kindly lent by the York Street congregation.

Obituary.

FRANCIS LINDSAY, M.R.C.V.S., Derryboy.

Mr. Francis Lindsay, a member of one of the oldest families of the Killinchy Congregation, passed away somewhat suddenly on January 6th. He was the eldest son of the late Thomas Lindsay, Derryboy, and brother of the present Thomas Lindsay, the respected treasurer of our Congregation. Mr. Frank, as he was known to his acquaintances, was originally designed for the drapery

business and started his career at the Bank Buildings, but owing to a knee that was hurt he had to discontinue. During a tedious convalescence he began to study and ultimately received his education as a Veterinary Surgeon at Edinburgh, where he received his London diploma of M.R.C.V.S. He began his professional career in England, being stationed in Derby for some time. Afterwards he joined the Army as Veterinary Surgeon, with which he continued off and on for the rest of his life. In this capacity he spent much of his time in South Africa and had a minute and intimate knowledge of conditions in that country. He knew and probably understood the Africanders better than many people who talk about them. He had many quaint episodes to relate of the simplicity and shrewdness of the South African Dutch. During the Great War Mr. Lindsay was stationed at Dublin as Veterinary Superintendent and held the rank of Captain in the Army.

Since the war he had resided at Derryboy, retired from active service. His health had not been altogether satisfactory, but not alarmingly so, until about Christmas Eve, when he developed great pain in the knee. He was removed to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, where he was operated on, but all to no purpose, for he soon passed away in the 55th year of his age. The funeral, one of the largest seen in the neighbourhood for many years, took place on January 8th, and the interment in the Family Burying Ground, Killyleagh. Much sympathy is felt for his brothers and sisters at the loss of a genial and kindly personality.

Miss Potter, Killinchy.

An old and valued member of this church, passed peacefully to her rest on Sunday, January 17th, at the great age of 90 years. Miss Jane Potter was for a great number of years an active and self-sacrificing member of the church, and was extensively known in this capacity, deeply interested in our church connection, generally. It is difficult to imagine any one more wholeheartedly immersed in church activity than our old friend. She worked and planned for any and every movement that was advantageous to the vigorous life of the Congregation. She gave liberally of her means as long as she was able, was a regular attender at the services and a successful Sunday School teacher, beloved to this day by her old scholars, who speak of her with gratitude and veneration. She taught in the Sunday School for a long period of time. She was instrumental in helping to establish a Sunday School at Ballydorn, where she also was a teacher. She was indefatigable in every good work as long as strength lasted. She had great capacity for industry and thus lived a busy and on the whole a happy and cheerful life, though she had her difficulties and sorrows. With comparatively small resources she was helpful and encouraging to many people. The Christian Motto : " It is more blessed to give than to receive " was admirably exemplified in her life. No one ever gave more and received less in return. Of late years at her advanced age, she made her home with her niece, Mrs. W. J. M'Cann, of the Whiterock, who along with her husband and family attended to her comfort with praiseworthy fidelity. Her funeral took place on Tuesday, January 19th, and the interment in the Old Meeting House Green, Killinchy; the Rev. D. J. Williams officiating in the house and at the graveside.

Miss Mary Sloane.

Miss Mary Sloane, cousin of Mrs. Ashworth (wife of the Rev. Alexander O. Ashworth), died on 13th January, 1926, after a long illness during which she was tenderly nursed by her sister Mrs. Gilliland. Her father and mother were members of Dr. Montgomery's congregation, Dunmurry. She and her brother James, were members of Moneyrea Congregation, and when they came to reside in Belfast they became members of York Street, during Rev. Alex. O. Ashworth's ministry there. Mary was a descendant of the brother of Sir Hans Sloane, who after

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obtaining his degree of F.R.C.S. in London, become physician to the then Sovereign. His famous collection of works of art and antiques was bequeathed to the British nation on the condition that a home should be provided for them, and this formed the beginning of the British Museum, London. His daughter, Mary, married Colonel (afterwards Earl) Cadogan. Miss Mary Sloane, of whom we write, had the poetic sentiment largely developed, and was a person of considerable literary talent. She was a great admirer of Lord Byron's style and quoted him at length when occasion arose. She was ever moved by the mental motive, and was a great wit and full of dry humour, which seemed native to her. She was buried in the Meeting House Green, Drumbo, the service in the house (89 Malone Avenue, Belfast), being conducted by her former minister, Rev. Alex. O. Ashworth, and that at the graveside by Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., her minister of recent years.

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